The Higher Christian Life

ALFRED COOKMAN

FAMILIAR TALKS

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY

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PREFACE.

These "Familiar Talks," or addresses, were prepared by Alfred Cookman, and delivered at meetings for the promotion of holiness, conducted by himself, during his three years' pastorate of Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, Wilmington, Delaware. They were written out in full by his own hand, with the purpose, no doubt, of having them published. But the good man dying soon after they were written, the family were not aware of the existence of the manuscript until some time after his death. "Consecration" and "Experience" are added by the compiler.

These contain about all that Alfred Cookman has left, directly, on the subject of holiness, except his life, which is of

more value than all beside. This will live as a vindication of holiness as an experience, when all else is forgotten.

These "Talks" are pervaded with the same spirit which was ever manifest in the man "whose praise is still in all the churches." W. M.

THE EXPERIENCE DEFINED.

Some will ask, what we mean by the higher Christian life. Without referring to the theological aspects of this subject, aspects that are frequently puzzling and perplexing, we answer, We mean that religious experience which is the great need of the Church, and the conscious and confessed want in personal experience. We do not wish to be sectarian in our views or teachings; ignoring everything of the kind, forgetting all other differences that would infringe at all upon the prejudices of any one, let us merge all in a concern for personal good, and for the benefit of others.

Some exalt the higher Christian life, and put it so far away from them that the

attainment seems entirely impracticable. Now, the case is simply this: A great many of us, as professing Christians, feel that a work of grace has been begun in us. We want to do God's will in all things. You may call this experience what you please. It is the *state* for which we are concerned; to stand complete in Christ; to be strong. There are a great many professing Christians who are influenced by the will of God in the matter of outbreaking sins, and yet, in the little matters of life, such as have to do with their pride, their appetites, their temper, their prejudices, or their services, they follow their own will. God's honor is in so far compromised. They find themselves wanting in a strong, round, full, vigorous, useful piety. They lack a satisfying and an abiding rest of soul. They say: "I cannot hope to walk in the clear light of full salvation."

There must be the most entire submission, the most unhesitating acceptance of God's will.

The other feature of this experience is an implicit faith in Christ, as a perfect Saviour, who saves me moment by moment, and saves me fully; saves me not only from wilful sin, but saves me from the proneness to sin; that is, Himself to restrain and subdue all the tendencies of my nature; to save me from the love of sin, so that I hate it with an increasing hatred; to save me from fear, that bringeth torment; to save me in my life from falling into sin; in my cares, perplexities, temptations, oppositions, trials; to feel that, while I trust in Him He keeps me; He teaches me; He strengthens me. "I have not brought my mind," you say, "to lay aside prejudice, and accept the doctrine of holiness, or entire sanctification. I have

not brought my mind to confess with my mouth Christ's full power to save. I have not brought my mind to render every service that Heaven may require. I think if I were holy I would have to be somewhat plainer in my dress, and I am hardly willing for that. I would have to give up some of my indulgences, or worldly ambition, or enjoyment, and I am hardly willing for that." Now, there are thousands in the Church who feel just in that way, and they retain this lingering, smouldering rebellion of soul, this developing and conscious unwillingness to do what God may require. These are the matters which keep us from the fulness of God. But God does not cast us off, but guides us and preserves us from open offence.

Now, it is the harmony of the human with the Divine will in everything, even in little matters of life, and this constant

trust in Jesus at every turn, and in all places, and under all circumstances, which constitute the higher Christian life. This is the entire sanctification of ourselves to God. Three things are needed to secure this: 1. To be satisfied that this experience is desirable, and that it has been provided for you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 2. Meet fairly and fully this question of entire submission on your part. What nourishes your pride, give that up. What feeds your selfishness, slay the destroyer. Yield up your prejudices; lay aside the doubtful indulgence; humbly meet the test of obedience; be willing to be holy, to be nothing, to be accounted a fool for Christ's sake. 3. Trust in Jesus now for what He is willing and able to grant you. Definite faith is a definite power, for a definite result. Take these steps, and take them now. Resolve to have the grace, and have it now.

FALSE VIEWS OF HOLINESS.

Last week some of you rose and thereby expressed your purpose to pray, and seek, and wait, and trust, especially during the week, for the conscious presence of the Holy Ghost, as your sanctifier. We have been praying for you. Have you been praying very earnestly for yourselves? Have you resigned all into the hands of Jesus—as your Trustee—conscious of failure to save yourselves? Do you hold all henceforth and forever only as His steward? Do you believe His word? Do you trust His promise? Do you rely upon His testimony, that "faithful is He that hath called you, who also will do it?" Oh, friend, in an agony of desire feel, I must be saved fully. I must be saved just now, —this hour, while I am speaking. "Faith-

ful is He who hath called you, who also will do it."

"I cannot say or profess that I am sanctified," so said a dear friend to me only yesterday. This sentiment is, I make no doubt, the expressing and feeling of a good many hearts. Now, respecting this trouble or difficulty, I have three remarks to make:

First. I would have you remember what is meant by being sanctified. Some exaggerate, in their own minds, this term, and have a dreamy and confused idea of something which is little short of Adamic, or angelic, or even Divine perfection. Now, the fact is, you cannot be Christians at all without being sanctified, or earnestly pursuing after it. For sanctification means, set apart for sacred uses, and this we do coeval with our justification and regeneration. Hence Mr. Wesley and all the theologians teach that sanctification begins at

conversion. The saved, or rather, the entirely saved which interests us in this meeting, involves the same spirit, the same submission, differing only in yielding up regenerated powers; in satisfying every test of obedience that the Spirit may raise in our thoughts, or lay upon our conscience, in meeting the will of God in all the little incidents of everyday life, and all the developments of personal experience. I am saved, entirely saved, is only to say that as far as God gives me illumination and ability, I am all the Lord's. I keep back nothing. I give Him everything. I subordinate my will to the requirements of His most holy and excellent will.

Second. The second remark I wish to make on this point is that while there must not be an unwillingness to say, I am saved, or, indeed, anything else that the Holy Spirit may dictate; we are not shut up to

that, or to any particular mode of expression. The Scriptures themselves use a vast variety of phrases, and so would seem to afford us some license in the selection of the expression that may embody or communicate our experience at the time. One humbly testifies that, "I have sanctified myself unto God, carefully, intelligently, specifically, and I believe that through Jesus my whole burnt offering is accepted now." Another says, "I believe I love God with all my heart, and most certainly this perfect love casteth out all fear." Another says, "I have an inward sense of purity through the blood of the Lamb." Another says, "I have put all on the altar and am living a life of faith on the Son of God, realizing that Jesus not only saves me, but keeps me saved." Now, any or all of these confessions glorify Jesus. Do not, therefore, perplex your mind about

phrases, but get the grace, enjoy the experience, and then trust the Holy Ghost to help you in expressing yourself in the satisfactory manner.

Third. Our third remark is, that in the performance of the grace, or rather confession, for I like that term very much better, we predicate nothing of self, but give all the glory to the grace and power and worth of Jesus.

Ask the best man about himself, and you will find "he loathes himself, and into nothing falls." The fact is, that as we rise higher in the Christian life, self loses itself; it sinks down lower and lower, until it is lost sight of, while God fills more and more the orbit of our reason until we feel He is our all in all. This is one of the strongest internal evidences of the Divinity of our religion, for any religion whose tendency is in that direction, must of necessity

be Divine. When this one says, I am satisfied, or that the blood cleanseth, you must not understand him as declaring that he is better than others, for I assure you that that is not for one moment his thought or his feeling. He is only concerned to bring glory to Jesus, "who of God is made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." He would multiply the crowns upon the head of the infinite Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, you did not boast when you affirmed that Jesus is my righteousness, did you? May you put a crown on *His* worthy head. Neither are you Pharisaic, or boastful when you declare that Christ is my sanctification. You are bringing another crown; you are glorifying a little more the power and grace of Jesus. See that your motive is pure, and then bear your testimony, make your confession, trusting Jesus with the result.

FEARING THE LIGHT.

To a worldly-minded professor of religion no doctrine is more unwelcome or mysterious or incredible than this. But how unlike this is it with a believer, hungering and thirsting after righteousness! The reason why this doctrine is unwelcome is because such persons are afraid of the light. This was expressed by a member of an orthodox church, who when asked if he would not go to hear such a brother who was preaching on the subject of holiness, said, "No, I do not expect to live as he preaches, and if his doctrine is true, I do not wish that light may be shed upon my responsibility." I am thankful for the interest, the concern that has brought you here to-day, but now, do not satisfy your conscience with mere interest on the sub-

ject. Get all out of this hour, this occasion, that is possible. You are interested—that is well; attentive—that is well, inquiring—that is well, also; but remember there it not only truth here, but a living Christ, an Almighty Spirit; and if you will come humbly and earnestly and believingly, you may learn more by one hour's experience than by a lifetime of teaching and theorizing. Some, perhaps, feel a fear of, and a shrinking from, the light. You are afraid it will reveal some service or sacrifice that you cannot perform. But now remember two things: first, it is the light of infinite wisdom, holiness and love; the light in which you ought to wish to walk, for your own sake; the light that involves the best life, that leads to God, that leads to heaven. Just as well or appropriately turn your back on God, or heaven, as on this light. Second, the other thought I wish to

give you in this connection is that the position, or service, or sacrifice, from which you shrink, is not impossible. Just say, I will do this for *Christ's* sake; I can do anything for His sake. I would die for His sake, and now, then, I will undertake this task and do it, as unto Jesus, calling Him to witness to the purity of my motive. Then you may believe He will help you, for He does not send us on a warfare at our own charges. He will help, He will strengthen. His grace shall be sufficient for you. He teaches us to say, "Thy will be done." Now, it is clear that we cannot say that in our own strength. If the other strength is necessary to say it willingly and sincerely and every day, it is reasonable to suppose that He, infinitely able, with inexhaustible resources, will give us strength to meet these points to-day. I beseech you to meet them now.

Approaching into the Divine Presence we must come, not as men and women, but as little children, for God is our Father. We are His children by faith in Jesus Christ. He delights in the simplicity, sincerity, truthfulness and love of beautiful childhood. Hence, "He that will be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven must become as a little child." Now, as a company of Christ's children, what is our object? Is it not to consider the appropriateness and importance of being more obedient, faithful, devoted in our Father's service? Aye, of being entirely obedient, for we cannot satisfy our conscience, or meet His demands, while our obedience or faithfulness is faulty at any point.

give you the ability, and you will find service practicable and pleasant which you regard irksome and impossible. Now, friends, do not say, I cannot; it is impossible; but say, I am willing, if Christ gives the ability, and I will trust Him for it. Surrender all your hesitation and fear and unbelief; put them on the altar; put your lips, your tongue, your voice, your stammering speech, on the altar. Put them there to-day, and then, as you go forward in the path of obedience, be looking for the baptism of fire and power. It will come. Oh, friends, now! now! What we want is what Christ desires to bestow. There are multitudes in the valley of indecision. Some of you are hesitating, and your hesitation grieves Jesus. "Do you know," said a lady of intelligence and prominence in the Church, to another; "do you know that this profession of holiness

is not popular?" "Oh, yes, we know that certainly," was the answer. Then, after a moment's pause, she asked of the lady of position, "But why are you not holy? why do you not enjoy the blessing?" Mark the answer: "Because I am not willing to be singular for Christ's sake. If I should obtain the blessing, I know that I should be called to be so unlike the mass of professors of religion that really I am not willing to make such a mark of myself." Mark! mark! ! she was not willing to pay the cost of being holy. But, oh, why did she not count the cost of not being holy? especially in view of the account she will be called upon to give in the day of reckoning, for those whom she might have led by her example and influence in the way of holiness. Oh, friend, you must not hesitate, for your soul's sake, for your usefulness, for the Church, for Jesus.

ADDRESS ON RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

Another week has transpired, with all its advantages and opportunities. It has passed by. It is gone irrevocably and eternally gone. Dear friend, what contribution has it made to our character and Christian usefulness? Have you been making advances in the knowledge and love and likeness of Jesus? Aye, but this inquiry covers a large period. Let it take in months and even years. Have you been going on to perfection? Suppose that, stepping into a school, we should find a man of twenty-five in one of the elementary classes. We should certainly be surprised. But our astonishment would be greater if we were informed that for ten years he had been a member of the same school, and

a member of the same class; that little or no progress had been made during all these years. Oh, friends, some of you have been in the school of Jesus for five years, ten years, fifteen years, twenty years. By this time you ought to be versed in the deep things of God. You ought long since to have been directors and helpers of others, but let me ask, How many have *you* helped into the cleansing fountain of Jesus' blood? How many can say of you that you were instrumental in the salvation of their souls? We are not likely to help others into this fountain until we have been in there ourselves. We cannot lead others unless we ourselves go before.

I was deeply impressed some time since in listening to a ministerial brother who said that for eight years he had preached the doctrine of full salvation, but did not know that during that time one was influ-

enced to accept of and appropriate Jesus as his full Saviour. But he remarked: "Since I entered into this experience myself I know of a number who through my humble instrumentality have been influenced to step into the Bethesda of redeeming love, grace and power." Friend, we must come into the experience, not simply desire it; we must come into it, if we would be developing scholars in the school of Jesus. If we would be helpers of those who are in the direction of the light; if we would help forward this doctrine which is to-day the hope of the Church, and the world.

AN HONEST INQUIRER DIRECTED.

For your own sake, for your comfort, for your usefulness, but especially for the sake of the will and glory of Jesus, I am anxious that you should come out into the light of a clear, satisfactory and blessed experience. Oh, how gladly would I help you! I remember, however, that there is no teacher, no leader, like the infinitely wise and Holy Spirit. He leads into all truth. He shall teach you all things. He taketh of the things of Christ, and showeth them unto us. Oh, blessed Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, we recognize thy wisdom, power, goodness, glory. We worship Thee, we praise Thee, we love Thee, we glorify Thee. Oh, lead our thoughts; quicken our desires; help our faith, and enable us to say and feel and

do what will be in harmony with Thy blessed will.

Let me ask you three questions: First, Is your soul all athirst for God? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Are you panting to be filled with all the fulness of God? Perhaps this is with some of us our greatest need, for certainly strong desire is an antecedent, if not a condition, of the saving, sanctifying grace of God. "Whatsoever things ye desire." Then desire would seem to be a condition of success. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence. We are not likely to exhibit violence, except as the result of violent desire. I am inclined to think that some of us might appropriately look in upon our desires, and, finding them feeble, call upon God to increase our hungering and thirsting after righteousness. We must be interested and in earnest for heart

purity. Second, When you make a consecration, do you not feel or find that it does not hold? You say, O Lord, I give myself to Thee sincerely, carefully, fully. I will make any sacrifice, perform any service, endure any trial. But a little while after, some test of obedience has been supplied; an opportunity is gone to tell what you have done; to use your consecrated lips for Jesus; and you falter, you fail. Now, we must remember that by the act of consecration we place ourselves in the path of obedience, and virtually promise to go forward, and we must go forward, performing the duty of the hour during the hour, looking to Jesus for light, strength and help. Walk in this path of obedience, and see if it does not bring you into the Beulah region. But there are some who have given themselves to God, who are treading the path of obedience, aye, are waiting on the

Lord and looking to Jesus, and still they do not realize the experience they are looking for. Now, then, we come to the third reason: Are you not letting your mind dwell upon an experience that you covet rather than upon Christ Himself? No one ought to take the exercises of another, and expect the Spirit to lead him exactly in the same way. Human temperaments differ almost as much as human faces. Besides, the Infinite Jehovah is original in all His workings. We must submit our ideas to Him, and welcome His hand to mould our clay as He may desire or deem best. Our faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and promises of God. If we desire light, we look at the sun itself, rather than at some object upon which it shines. Take, then, whatever Infinite Wisdom may give, and take it in the way in which He is pleased to give it. If it is not

a wonderful baptism of power and glory, be satisfied with rest and quiet. If it does not come very suddenly, receive it gradually. If you do not find it in the heights, take it in the depths. Surrender up your will in the matter. To-day be in earnest for this great salvation. Let us consecrate ourselves and all we have, and then, moving forward in the path of obedience, let us not be concerned about anything so much as to be all the Lord's. Trust Jesus perfectly, and take what His grace may give. Concerning Christian purity, the question perhaps has arisen in your mind as to the nature of this purity. Is it a purity in or of ourselves? or is it a purity in and through Christ? We answer: It is a purity in and through Christ, putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, invested in Him personally; accepting Him as our Sanctifier and Sanctification. Our consciousness is

not of ourselves, but of Him, taking Him into our heart as our perfect Saviour, He assumes the responsibility, and while we continue to trust in Him, He reigns as the Lord God of every emotion. Perhaps I can make this clearer by an illustration: Suppose, then, a man, mean and narrow in his disposition, falling into the society of a noble and powerful nature, distinguished for the magnanimity of his impulses. Suppose the narrow man accepts the noble individual as his friend; admires him, trusts him, loves him. Do you not see that while they are associated, the noble nature will seem to invest the other with his own magnanimity, so that his native meanness would be subordinated, and there would be developed a generous life and feeling? Now, keep him in the world of superinduced character, and he will necessarily be assimilated to it. On the other hand, with-

draw him from the better nature, and he speedily falls back into his native meanness, and becomes what he was, with some slight modifications. And now for the application of our illustration. Christ is that better nature, which has power, while we believe in Him with a total and all-subjecting faith, to invest us with His own glorious purity, and to bring every thought into captivity with His own incorruptible order, and chastity, but with this difference: The assimilation is more rapid and certain, because of the agency of the Spirit concurring with the powers of Christ, and the union established by faith is more interior and indissoluble. He is thus kept in the conscious purity of Christ's own peace and love and holiness, while at the same time the assimilation goes on necessarily and constantly, and all through life he is growing up into Christ his living Head in all things.

Is not this the explanation of those two passages which lie in close proximity in the same epistle, and at first would seem to be contradictory? In the first chapter of the general Epistle of John, the apostle says: "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves." The apostle here, as I understand, is speaking of human nature in itself, human nature separated from Christ. A little farther on he says: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." Sinneth not, because united to Christ, His blood cleanseth, and His Almighty Spirit taketh of the things of the Spirit and showeth them unto him, so that constantly he is becoming more and more Christlike. Perhaps some one, striving to live a life of faith, says: "I hesitate to profess, or testify, that I am living a holy life. I see so much of imperfection and weakness and shortcomings." Are you not allowing your thought to take

in too much time and space? Does it not include the past day or hour in that remark? and as you look at your life you only see your own life, and its imperfections, and not the Christ who has been walking with you in your life, supplementing your deficiencies with His own merit, and so recommending you to the everlasting Father. You suggest, I cannot say that I am living a holy life. Now, observe you are not living in the past; you are only living in the present, and during the present you are looking to and trusting in Jesus for full salvation. Now, is not this, in the light of the New Testament dispensation, a holy life? Mark, not in and of yourself, but in and through Jesus, giving all the glory to Jesus. Every man is sanctified according to his faith, for it is by this trusting of himself to Christ moment by moment that he becomes invested, exalted,

irradiated, and finally glorified, in Christ. Forget the past; forget the future, and say that during this moment your consecration is complete and steady.

"There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." We come into the Divine presence pleading these promises. We associate with them the name and merit of Jesus. We say, for Christ's sake fulfil to me their truthfulness and preciousness. According to our faith it is done unto us. The blessed Holy Ghost takes this truth of Heaven, and assures it to us in our consciousness. Thus we are sanctified through the truth, for God's Word is truth. Thus we are made clean through the word spoken unto us. Thus "we are made partakers of the Divine nature," through the exceeding great and precious promises. This nature is pre-eminently a holy nature. Tillotson says:

"The holiness of God is not a particular, but a universal perfection of the Divine nature." It is the beauty and perfection of all the other perfections. Take it away and you bring a universal stain and blemish upon the Divine perfection. For illustration: Without holiness God's power would be an unholy power, and that would be oppression. Without it His wisdom would be subtlety and cunning, His sovereignty would be tyranny, His justice would be cruelty, His mercy would be foolish pity, His truth would be falsehood. Hence the Scriptures speak of holiness as being Jehovah's highest excellence and greatest perfection. God is said to be "glorious in holiness." Holiness is His throne. He sitteth on the throne of His holiness. Holiness is His habitation. He looks down from heaven and beholds from the habitation of His holiness. Now, while this is a lofty and

ennobling conception of God, at the same time it is a beautiful and practical truth when applied to ourselves, for, as we have said, we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and so we become like God. Holiness which invests all His perfections in like manner invests all our attributes made after the Divine image. For instance, our power will be holy, and will not be marked by oppression. Our wisdom will be free from duplicity and cunning. Our sovereignty, if we are masters or rulers or parents, will be free from tyranny. Our justice will be tempered by mercy. If we go farther, our desires will be holy—pure desires. Our affections will be holy—right affections. Our tempers will be holy—gentle tempers. Our motives will be holy, humble and honest motives. Our words will be holy words, gentle, charitable, profitable. Our actions will be holy actions,

in harmony with God's will. Our lives will be patterned after the beautiful life of Jesus. Now, is not all this beautiful and practicable? If all this comes of being partakers of the Divine nature, shall we not be concerned to partake, if we may partake? There are the promises. Shall we not come pleading? Do you ask what promises? "Whatsoever ye ask," etc. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "And the very God of peace sanctify," etc.

Holiness is power, power with God, for "If ye abide in me ye may ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Power with men, allied with the Divinity—God dwelling in us. There is an influence connected with our words, our example, and our life that men feel and acknowledge. Have we not ourselves realized it in others?

We want that power for the sake of our usefulness. We have relations with friends whom we want to see converted. What joy to recognize them as fellow-pilgrims in the way to life! Have you all the power to plead with God for their salvation that you ought to have? Is there not something about your own spirit that restrains and hinders your faith? Have you the courage to speak to them definitely on the subject of their salvation? Do you not feel condemned by your own tardiness, or hesitation, in responding to the will of God? How can you expect them to come to the measure of their duty when you, a servant, a friend, a child of God, refuse to come to the measure of your duty? Precious friend, refuse no longer. Resolve that here and now I will be holy. I will make the consecration; I will exercise the faith; I will persevere and go forward in the

path of obedience; I will confess for Jesus, sacrifice for Jesus, suffer, if need be, for Jesus. There must be more courage, purpose, self-abandonment, faith in God. Cut the last shore line and push out into the deep waters of the great ocean of the Divine fulness. The Lord help you!

VACILLATION IN CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Do I err when I say fitfulness characterizes too much the experience and life of professing Christians? They are wanting in steadiness, in strict, self-sacrificing and unswerving fidelity. They do very well for a little while. We flatter ourselves that they are going to be a power in the Church and a blessing to the world, but it is not long before we find reason for the lamentation, "Thy goodness is like the morning cloud or the early dew." What is the reason of this? I think it is twofold: First, their religion is too much an emotional experience. I do not ignore the emotional. God has made us emotional beings, and has kindly produced love, joy and peace to satisfy that part of our nature,

but we need a different motive power, a more powerful principle of action. The just shall live, not by feeling, but by faith. There must be a steady, determined reliance upon the truth and power and grace of God. Second, the other reason, or explanation of this fitful, unstable experience and life is that Christians are wanting in their consecration and self-sacrifice. They think they consecrate themselves, but they do not live in the spirit of consecration. They do not remember their consecration. It is one thing to consecrate ourselves. It is quite another thing to remember that we are thus consecrated, and act in harmony with it. Wanting in this consecration, they do not go forward in the path of self-sacrifice and obedience, and it is only in that path that we can hope for a steady, growing and satisfactory experience. Now, the grace we seek for in this service is, as

we think, the remedy for this defect in Christian life; for, first, it implies a careful, intelligent and entire consecration, and then a life in harmony with it. In other words, a life of strict Christian obedience; and, second, it implies a steady, continuous exercise of faith, entirely independent of one's frames and feelings. This will make us independent of merely emotional experiences. If God give us abounding peace or unspeakable joy, we will praise Him; but if He withhold, we will trust Him, so that always our safety is assured. Your experience has been fitful long enough, aye, entirely too long. You need to be established; to be settled; to be strong, do you not? Then you must be holy! You must be holy now, to-day. Oh, do not attempt to satisfy your want in thinking over the matter, in striving to come up to the measure of your privilege in attending

this meeting, in promising yourself you will grapple with obligation and privilege. This is not the cure for your fitfulness and hesitation. Come up to the duty to-day, and, influenced by the mercies of God, present yourself once for all and for ever, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

A LIFE OF FAITH.

We cannot too strongly insist upon the point that the higher Christian life, as it is sometimes denominated, is peculiarly a life of faith. There are very many who get their minds filled with the idea that there is a special experience in connection with this grace, and they are most earnestly and persistently in quest of this experience. Now, there is an experience, of course, but this is not the main feature of the grace. Its main feature is faith in God; an acceptance of and a submission to the will of God. Such a constant acquiescence as makes us independent of experience. If God gives us a joyful experience, we accept it as an indication of His will while it is given. If He withholds a joyful experience, we are satisfied, for we recognize

that, too, as an indication of His will while it is withheld. The point is, to keep our will steady to the Divine will, to live a life of faith in God. This suggestion will be important, not only for those who are struggling for a higher life, but for some who are living that life. "If all the Lord says is true, then why am I thus? I am often without joy; sometimes my mind is not perfectly composed; now and then my communion with God seems interrupted. Again, I suffer severe inward conflicts. I am frequently unconscious of anything like trouble; and again, in these distresses, I cannot always understand my condition, but am perplexed in regard to my state." First, observe you say, "I am often without joy." Now, let me ask, does sanctifying grace imply perpetual joy? I think the testimony of witnesses (living and dead) on this point is that their prevailing

state of mind is not of high emotion. On the contrary, they have calmness, quietness and rest of soul. Second, ah, but you say, "My mind is not always perfectly composed." True, it may be hurried, through its connection with the body and the world around; through nervous influences and passing events. It may also be discomposed through ignorance or misconception, but observe, mental disquiet does not infer unsanctified affection. Third, but you say, "My communion with God sometimes seems interrupted." Mark, *seems* interrupted. You may be mistaken in this matter. What is communion with God? Is it unceasing rapture in prayer; is it an unvarying sense of God's presence; is it an equally distinct apprehension at all times of His love to us? Is it an unchanging degree of assurance? Nay, is it not rather steady faith in God; and may there not be

this faith without much, if any, joy? Fourth, but "I suffer inward conflicts." Yes, and so do all the sanctified. We are sanctified to prepare us for conflict. Those who are most holy are often set in the front of the battle. Fifth, but "I am frequently unconscious of anything like triumph." Is thy triumph in the midst of the battle? The soldier first fights and then triumphs. Mark, in the midst, a joy of hope. Sixth, "I am sometimes perplexed respecting my religious state." This may involve the intellect rather than the affections. Entire sanctification does not imply perfect self-knowledge. We may wish to know too much. If we understood all we should have no need to trust. We may know, and we ought to know, our general state, and where we stand in Divine things.

This higher life, then, does not imply perpetual rejoicing. And now to confirm

these propositions, glance at the blessed Redeemer. In Him we have an example of perfect sanctification. Was He perfectly joyful? Hear Him say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." Yes, He was a man of sorrows. Did Christ maintain undisturbed mental composure? Think of His scene of agony in the garden and on the cross. He was sore amazed. Did Jesus have uninterrupted communion with the Father? In the sense of confidence He had. Had the Saviour freedom from severe conflict? Nay, a life of conflict. Did Jesus always trust? He always withstood, never yielded. Triumph implies exultation. Was Jesus a man always aware of the necessity of His present sufferings? As He was, so are we—perfect resignation.

What poet is it says of the lark, "Whose nest is in the furrow, but whose soul is in the skies"?

It seems to me that is a just description of the entirely sanctified disciple. "His soul disdains on earth to dwell; he only sojourns here." His home is in the empyrean, in the pure atmosphere and surpassing glories of the Divine presence. The Hindoos talk about a bird so ethereal that it lives in the upper air, feeding on the moonbeams and drinking the virgin shower. This is a fable, of course, but is it not true of the believer, that living a life of faith he lives above the world, feeding on the shining of the Sun of Righteousness and refreshing himself with the virgin waters of the Holy Spirit? Believe me, dear friends, if we are in the world we must not be of it, partaking of its spirit, and following its customs and maxims. Earthliness debilitates, defiles, degrades, and, sooner or later, destroys all vitality in the Divine life. You remember the

ancient fable of the giant who could not be subdued because every time he fell his mother, the earth, let such power into him that he sprang up at the moment and killed his antagonist, until Hercules, discovering the secret, held him in his grasp, not allowing him to touch the earth, and so crushed him. Exactly contrary is it with the Christian. The earth is not his mother. He is the child of the Sun of Righteousness, and if he descends to settle on the earth his strength vanishes. Now, brethren, if we would ascend into our native region, the region God has prepared for the soul, we must lay aside every weight. We must sever all the ties that unduly bind us to the earth. Not even right hands or right eyes must be spared. Selfishness and self-indulgence must be no more for us. We must get entirely away, and clearly and gloriously up—coming down no more.

We must lift up everything we do in it, and hope from it, into that purer life of sacrifice and trust in which we abide with the Master. It must be with us as it was with Noah when he made the ark. He did not expect partly to wade and partly to float, but he went in, he and his, taking all the freight of his world's stock with him. The Lord shut him in, and the Lord lifted him up, and the Lord took care of him. The waters now became his element, and he had no other. So, when we go out into faith we renounce every human trust. Our expectation must be alone on God, resting there, not on any human pillars.

Dear, precious friends, we have been talking together for nearly three years, and yet we feel that we have much to say—more, very much more, than we shall have time to communicate. Some of you, during our pastorate in Wilmington, have felt it

your duty and privilege to devote yourselves in a fuller sense to the service and glory of Jesus. I am concerned that you should be steadfast and immovable. If, however, you should fall from the experience to which the Spirit of God has lifted you, you may recover it again, but you will find it has lost its virgin freshness. It will then, as now, be sanctification through the blood, but there will be the tormenting memory of loss, of unfaithfulness, that will sometimes flit like a cloud across your sky. Oh, friends, do not carelessly part with this summer bloom of Christian character and religious experience. Sacrifice, suffer, die, but be true to this grace.

First, refuse to comply with temptation under any circumstances, or to any degree. The slightest compliance will soil your garments. Do not ever parley with the enemy. Avoid the very appearance of

evil. Second, live in the use of all the ordinary means of grace and prayer. The more I pray the happier I am. The mightiest men, Luther, Bramwell, Collins, Hewittson, Jesus, prayed without ceasing. Third, meditation. We must sometimes stop to take our reckoning. Fourth, searching the Scriptures with a humble, honest, teachable spirit, and oh, the joy you will feel as you find some great nugget of gold, as you dig around the roots of these great trees of Heaven's planting will make this exercise a rich privilege and an exceeding joy. Fifth, Christian communion with those who are intrusted to live the higher Christian life. This communion you may find in conversation, religious biography, meetings for the promotion of holiness. Sixth, cherish the spirit of entire sanctification. Seventh, live a life of faith. Not a life of painful endeavor. It operates

when we do not think of it. It is that mysterious hand by which the holy soul clings to God amid all temptation, and so is kept from sin. Eighth, learn to live by the minute. Take care of the moment while you have it, and the next when it comes. You can live the minute without sin. Do it then. The days are made of moments. In all these counsels remember God is the efficient agent. He gives you power to will, and then you are kept by His power.

THE DUTY OF CONFESSION.

We have attempted to show you that the confession of Christ and of the work He has wrought in our hearts is a duty, involving an interest, a fruit, a necessity, a requirement, a power, and an investment. Now, let me remind you that we cannot afford to lose this spirit of confession out of our experience for an hour, no more than we can afford to lose the spirit of humility, or consecration, or faith. Indeed, these are all united. Our confession promotes our humility and our consecration, strengthens and illustrates our faith. Now, retaining the spirit of confession during every hour, its appropriate expression will be determined by the circumstances of the hour. If there is no opportunity for verbal testimony, then I

must in my spirit and temper and tone and general style, if with a friend or a little circle of friends socially, I must in a conversational way acknowledge the grace of God in me. If in a public service, appointed for experience or confession, then I may profitably take up my cross, and declare humbly, but gratefully, what God has done for my soul. Beware of silence! If you have already grieved the Holy Spirit till confession is no longer easy or spontaneous as it once was, let us enact as a duty what should be a privilege, and thus recover what is lost. Let us be faithful witnesses and keep back nothing. Let it cover all our experience, not select portions of it, which involve no cross, because they invite no reproach. It is true circumstances should be regarded in performing this great duty. To profess perfect love in a large and mixed assembly might be

unseasonable, because it would not only be casting pearls before the unappreciative, but perhaps piling up obstacles in their path. Confession, in its proper time and place, will be thrice blessed, blessed in him that speaks and in him that hears; it will be a stream that maketh peace, that maketh glad on every side, for not only will its outflow refresh the house of God, but with a reflex force it will return on our own hearts, setting our graces in motion, and thus inviting the presence of the Holy Spirit to enlarge and fill all the chambers of our inmost life.

OBJECTIONS TO PROFESSION.

It has occurred to me that the distinctiveness of this grace of sanctification and of those professing it is an objection against it in some hearts. I have myself sometimes met with dear friends who have complained that those enjoying heart purity are a class or circle by themselves. Let me say in response that this distinctiveness, or apparent exclusiveness, is the result of their confession or witness. If they give up their distinctiveness, therefore, they must do it by giving up their definite testimony, and if they give up their definite testimony they must give up the grace or experience itself, for its vivid realization is most intimately and indissolubly connected with their humble confession. For illustration: One acknowledges that Christ is

his perfect Saviour; a testimony different from that of most around. That testimony necessarily makes the one bearing it more or less singular. Another makes the same grateful confession. That associates him with the first. A third realizes the same blessed experience and speaks of it. That adds him to the band that seems exclusive, for if they stand together of necessity they stand with their faces not averted from the Church and the world, but turned towards the Church and the world, while their most earnest desire and labor are to bring all to taste and enjoy the full salvation of the Gospel. Oh, friends, such feel that they could willingly die, if their death would make the Church holy as Christ would have it to be holy. Those who urge this objection against distinctiveness seem to forget that that is precisely the attitude they necessarily

hold to the world around. For instance, they say that God for Christ's sake has forgiven them their sins. That makes them different from the unforgiven. But are they exclusive because they belong to the Church rather than to the world? Nay, they feel that they love the world around better than the world loves itself, and earnestly speak and labor with reference to a time when the world shall be gathered within the pale of Zion, and the whole race shall acknowledge Christ "Lord, to the glory of God the Father." We are distinctive, it is true, but we are not selfish, or clannish, or exclusive. We do not get astray into a corner to enjoy our morsel alone, but we would do anything if we could persuade the whole Church to enjoy our meal with us. If they will not come we will still invite, and urge, and plead. But

meanwhile we cannot cease from our definiteness. Oh, no, it is of more value than gold. And now, dear friends, heed the voice of fraternal entreaty and act in the living present. I say act, as contra-distinguished from all that desiring and resolving and promising without acting, that has made up so much of your life. Act, do. Believe this hour for the full salvation of the Gospel, the entire salvation of your nature. Is not the power of Christ sufficient to achieve the result to-day? Certainly. Are not the promises as available to-day as they ever will be? Is not the blood of Jesus as efficacious this moment as it ever can be? Oh, what should hinder? Only give up your indisposition, or your unbelief. Give these up. They must be given up some time. Why not now? "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

SAVED TO THE DEPTHS.

We often think and speak and hear about being saved up into the higher degrees of Christ, and this is proper; but let us remember that it is equally important to be saved down, down to things small and lowly. Many years since God lifted upon me His reconciled countenance and gave me a place in His kingdom; but that other change, spoken of by Christ, viz., to become a little child, I am entering into more fully of late than ever before. God is carrying me down, down into the child mood. How I frequently realize this in prayer! I seem to go back to my *blessed* childhood. There is the same feeling of utter dependence, and yet of perfect security; the same forgetfulness of everything sinful and unholy, so that I come to be

only conscious of things that are pure. I seem to know how Jesus took the little children into His arms and blessed them. I remember how, when I was a child, I read that passage over and over again, and wished that I could have been one of that company of children, and that Jesus had taken me into His arms and blessed me. But since then I have many times known that the same Jesus still takes the little children in His arms and blesses them. The wish of my childhood has been realized. I am one of His little ones, and feel that I can repose on His bosom, with the simplicity and love and joy of a little child. I have sometimes listened to the song, "Oh, would I were a boy again." I thank God that I can in spirit and feeling and enjoyment be a child again. Aye, I can always be a child, with a sweet, simple, earnest, trusting, pure, loving

heart, more than when I was a child. Spiritual childhood is better than natural childhood, for it combines all that is good in a child's heart, with what is valuable in that same heart when matured. The trust may be stronger and more perfect, the purity purer, something much more than the innocence of ignorance.

THE BRANCH AND THE VINE.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit."

Observe here, the branch is in the vine, as the believer is in Christ. He derives his spiritual life from Him. He partakes of His nature. He bears fruit, and yet the Saviour speaks of the need of purging, or cleansing, that he may bring forth more fruit. Is not this in harmony with our own convictions and consciousness? Do we not believe, do we not feel, that if we were holy we would be more useful? Benjamin Abbott, when forty years of age, experienced religion. A preacher, visiting him one afternoon, said: "Brother

Abbott, the Lord has a greater blessing in store for you yet. He will sanctify your soul, as He has freed you from condemnation." His reply was: "I will have it right away." Going down on his knees he never ceased praying until he found it. As soon as he had found it he sprang from his knees and began a revival, and his labors for the Lord continued twenty years. Some one says, the devil never had a more difficult enemy to deal with in America. Now, if this cleansing is necessary to our fruit-bearing, it is reasonable to conclude that we may realize it now, for God expects and requires us to bear fruit now. I know that some think and suggest that death completes this work of our salvation. Is death, then, mightier than the power of Jesus? This influence of the Spirit to the truth of God? What is death? Is it not the absence of life,

just as darkness is the absence of light? It is nothing, and can this nothing destroy sin, the greatest of somethings? But sin may be destroyed.

A SABBATH WITH BELIEVERS.

Yesterday, dear friends, I spent very delightfully in Baltimore. In the morning I tried to preach on the subject of the Higher Christian Life. In the congregation I observed a large number of ministers and prominent laymen, indicating a decided interest respecting the matter of Christian privilege. In the afternoon they had a service similar to the one we are holding now. There was a large number of most refreshing testimonies, besides quite a number who were concerned to realize the fulness of Christ's great salvation. One brother, quite advanced in life, said that seven months since he had been helped to trust Jesus in a fuller sense, and that then, as in a moment, or by a single stroke, all his sin-

ful dispositions, or tendencies, had been taken away; nor had they been permitted to return, and during all that time he had been sweetly resting in Jesus. Another said: Amid the contingencies of life it was remarkable but reasonable to suppose that God had a grace that would render us every moment ready and competent in the prospect of our change. He had proved this to be true. Full salvation took away the fear of death, and he walked the earth assured that if he lived he was the Lord's, and if he died he was the Lord's. A pastor of one of the principal churches said, and I thought with great impressiveness, that he was tired of growing into the experience of full salvation. He had been trying that plan for thirty years, and it was slow work. He was satisfied that a special exercise of Divine power was necessary to lift the soul up into the

plane of the higher Christian life. Friends, does not his experience correspond with your own? You have been a Christian, how many years? Ten, fifteen, twenty, perhaps longer. Look back upon your development or growth. Has it brought you into the Beulah region, the Canaan of perfect love? Has it? Nay! Some of you will feel, after twenty years of growth, you are not much nearer the blessing to-day than you were in your earlier Christian life. Oh, come to-day and ask for the Holy Spirit's power, that will lift you higher than you can ever lift yourself, and cause you to triumph now in Christ as a perfect Saviour, a Saviour from all sin. Oh, how this experience pays when sickness lays its blighting hand upon us and we are dragged to the very portals of eternity. I had an illustration of this yesterday. Sister Inskip is se-

riously ill, a victim of pneumonia. There was a consultation of physicians in her room. I went to see her about the noon hour, remaining but a few moments. We conversed and prayed together. Oh, what a precious place it seemed! She said: "I am perfectly satisfied; good, aye, lost in the will of the Lord. Dying all will be well. I am not to be saved. I am saved, already saved."

CONSECRATION.

But just at this point some one will inquire for the difference between the consecration we made of ourselves at the time of our conversion, and the consecration that our entire sanctification calls for. This is an interesting question. The distinction, as we think, will develop *in four particulars.*

FIRST DIFFERENCE.

When we came to God for pardon we brought and offered powers that were *dead*, and only dead, in trespasses and in sins; but when we would realize the experience of entire sanctification, we consecrate powers that are permeated *with the new life of regeneration.* Hence, says an apostle, "Yield yourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead;" and

again, "I beseech you, brethren" (he is addressing Christians), "that ye present your bodies," *i. e.*, your souls and bodies, a part being put for the whole, yourselves, "*a living sacrifice.*" This is the first distinction.

SECOND DIFFERENCE.

When we dedicated ourselves to the divine service at conversion, we seemed to *mass our offering*, and said, very sincerely and earnestly,—

> "Here, Lord, I give myself away:
> 'Tis all that I can do;"

but when we would sanctify ourselves unto God, with a view to this richer and deeper experience, then, with the illumination received at conversion and characterizing our regenerated life, our consecration becomes more *intelligent, specific and careful.* It is not merely myself as before. It is now these hands, these feet, these senses, this body

with all its members and powers; it is now my soul, with all its ennobling faculties,—its understanding, judgment, memory, imagination, conscience, will and affections. It is now all my talents of time, influence, energy, reputation, home, kindred, friends, worldly substance—everything. Upon all we have and are we specifically and honestly inscribe, "Sacred to Jesus;" covenanting to use all in harmony with the divine will. Some at this point have been careful to write upon paper the several items that were included, as well as the several obligations that were assumed, in this fuller consecration of themselves to God. This was the case with the celebrated Dr. Jonathan Edwards of the Presbyterian Church.

THIRD DIFFERENCE.

When we would thus specifically sanctify ourselves unto God, there is likely to

rise up in the mind, or before the conscience, *some peculiarly trying test of obedience.* This is varied in different experiences. It may be a little thing, *a very little thing,* but it is not on that account any the less formidable. Eating an apple amid Paradisaical scenes would seem, from a human standpoint, to have been a very little thing; and then observe, it was a test required of one who was living before God. Adam failed in the test; a failure "that brought death into the world, and all our woe." So the test that infinite holiness may lay upon the regenerated may be a little thing, perhaps something connected with our appetites, or with our adornments, or with our associations, or with our services. The question may be, Will you give up that doubtful indulgence, a something in which you regard your own inclinations rather than your

soul's good and God's glory? Will you lay aside the *last weight* and the sin that doth so easily beset you? Will you take your place with the entirely devoted, and consent that those around shall say reproachfully, "*He is one of the sanctified?*" Oh! it is hesitation or reluctance upon just such points, that will explain very much of the feeble, halting, sickly religious experience and Christian life that characterizes too many of the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus.

FOURTH DIFFERENCE.

This will appear in the *object or end* of the two consecrations. When we came offering ourselves to God in the first instance, it was that we might obtain *pardon;* now we specifically yield all, including the doubtful indulgence, with a view to *heart purity.* Then, groaning under a sense of our guiltiness, we said, "O

wretched man that I am!" We wanted to be lifted into the relationship, and admitted to the privileges, of dear children. Now we come as children, having the spirit of adoption; not for pardon or peace, —these are not our conscious need,—but we come for a more perfect submission to the divine will; a more satisfactory sense of heart purity; an increased ability to do or suffer all the will of our Father in heaven, and a deeper and a more blessed rest in Christ.

Observe, then, these *four features*, as belonging more especially to the consecration required of the regenerated.

EXPERIENCE.

"When just ten years of age, I realized clearly and satisfactorily the converting grace of God. I never shall forget the twelfth of February, 1838,—the birthday of my eternal life."

Mr. Cookman's mind was first called to the subject of entire sanctification by the remark of his mother as he was about to leave his happy home to preach the gospel: "My son, if you would be supremely happy, or extensively useful in your ministry, you must be an entirely sanctified servant of Jesus."

"Frequently," he says, "I felt to yield myself to God, and pray for the grace of entire sanctification; but then the experience would lift itself in my view as a mountain of glory, and I would say, 'It is

not for me. I could not possibly scale that shining summit; and, if I might, my besetments and trials are such, I could not successfully maintain so lofty a position.' "

He was finally induced by Bishop and Mrs. Hamline, who were laboring in the vicinity, to seek the great blessing. "One week-day afternoon," he says, "after a most delightful discourse, he urged us to seize the opportunity, and do what we had often desired, resolved, and promised to do, viz., as believers, yield ourselves to God as those who were alive from the dead, and from that hour trust constantly in Jesus as our Saviour from all sin. I said, 'I will; with the help of the Almighty Spirit, I will.' Kneeling by myself, I brought an entire consecration to the altar; *i. e.*, Christ. I covenanted with my own heart and with my Heavenly Father, that this entire but unworthy of-

fering should remain upon the altar, and that henceforth I would please God by believing that the altar (Christ) sanctifieth the gift. Do you ask, What was the immediate effect? I answer, Peace,—a broad, deep, full, satisfying, and sacred peace. Still, I could not say that I was entirely sanctified, except as I had sanctified or set apart myself unto God."

The following day, he ventured to tell Bishop Hamline of his entire consecration and faith in Jesus, and in the confession realized increasing light and strength. Prayer was proposed by Mrs. Hamline. Mr. Cookman says: "Prostrated before God, one and another prayed, and while thus engaged, God, for Christ's sake, gave me the Holy Spirit as I had never received Him before, so that I was constrained to conclude and confess,—

"'Tis done! Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless;
Redemption through thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.'

The great work of sanctification, that I had so often prayed and hoped for, was wrought in me—even in me. I could not doubt it. The evidence in my case was as direct and indubitable as the witness of sonship received at the time of my adoption into the family of heaven. Oh, it was glorious, divinely glorious!

"Need I say that the experience of sanctification inaugurated a new epoch in my religious life? Oh, what blessed rest in Jesus! what an abiding experience of purity through the blood of the Lamb! what a conscious union and constant communion with God! what increased power to do or suffer the will of my Father in heaven! what delight in the Master's service! what fear to grieve the infinitely

Holy Spirit! what love for, and desire to be with, the entirely sanctified! what confidence in prayer! what illumination in the perusal of the sacred Word! what increased unction in the performance of public duties!"

This was the experience of a man of whom Bishop Foster said, on the day of his burial, that he was the most sacred man he had ever known. Entire sanctification was his theme, until he went "sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb."